



The Sixty-sixth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,680th Concert

Judith Ingolfsson, *violinist*
Vladimir Stoupel, *pianist*

June 15, 2008
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Sonate pour violon et piano (1927)

Allegretto

Blues (Moderato)

Perpetuum mobile (Allegro)

Ravel

La Valse (version for piano solo) (1920)

INTERMISSION

Hafliði Hallgrímsson (b. 1941)

Offerto for Violin Solo, op. 13

Ritað Í Sand (Written in Sand)

Línur Án Orða (Lines Without Words)

Flug Tímans (The Flight of Time)

Allt Að Því Sálmur (Almost a Hymn)

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Rondo brilliant for Violin and Piano in B Minor, op. 70, D. 895

The Musicians

Judith Ingolfsson, the 1998 Gold Medalist of the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, has established herself worldwide as an artist of uncompromising musical maturity, extraordinary technical command, and charismatic performance style. She made her debut as an orchestral soloist in Germany at the age of eight and has since performed on some of the world's most notable stages, including Carnegie Hall, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, Konzerthaus Berlin, and the Mann Concert Auditorium in Tel Aviv. She has been heard with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Indianapolis and Saint Louis. Outside the United States she has performed with the Alfred Schnittke Philharmonic Orchestra in Russia, the Bohemian Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra in the Czech Republic, the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, the Neubrandenburger Philharmonie in Germany, and the Royal Chamber Orchestra of Tokyo.

Ingolfsson has collaborated with many acclaimed conductors, including Raymond Leppard, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Gerard Schwarz, and Leonard Slatkin. A frequent guest soloist with the Iceland Symphony, Ingolfsson joined that orchestra on its fifteen-city North American tour in 2000. Her recital performances have taken her throughout the United States and around the world, including performances in Macao, Panamá, Puerto Rico, and Reykjavík. With pianist Vladimir Stoupel, she has played in Brooklyn's famed Bargemusic series, as well as in Germany, Italy, Poland, and Switzerland. An avid chamber musician, she has collaborated with the Avalon and Miami String Quartets, and has appeared with the Chamber Music Society Two of Lincoln Center. Among the American music festivals in which she has appeared are the Appalachian Summer, Cape and Islands Chamber Music, Grand Teton, and Strings in the Mountains festivals. In Europe, she has been a featured performer at Finland's Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, Germany's Bodensee Festival, Switzerland's Menuhin Festival, and the Orlando Festival in The Netherlands.

Ingolfsson is a faculty member at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Stuttgart. She plays a Lorenzo Guadagnini violin, crafted in 1750. Judith Ingolfsson and Vladimir Stoupel appear at the National Gallery by arrangement with Parker Artists of New York City.

VLADIMIR STOUPEL

Russian-born French pianist Vladimir Stoupel has established himself world-wide as an artist of extraordinary versatility, uncompromising musical intensity, and technical command. His emotionally charged interpretations span an extraordinary large piano repertoire, including rarely heard compositions of the post-war era and obscure composers of the twentieth century. A top prizewinner at the Geneva International Music Competition in 1986, Stoupel performs as soloist with many of the leading orchestras of the world, including the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Gewandhaus Orchestra, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, the Munich Symphony, the Russian State Orchestra, the Staatskapelle Mainz, and the Staatskapelle Weimar. He is a regular guest in such prestigious venues as the Alte Oper in Frankfurt am Main, Berlin Philharmonic Hall, Konzerthaus Dortmund, the Grosse Musikhalle in Hamburg, the Rudolfinum in Prague, and the Tonhalle in Düsseldorf. Stoupel has frequently performed at the New York Philharmonic's chamber music series at Merkin and Avery Fisher Halls. He has participated in many festivals, including the Berliner Festwochen; Festival La Grange de Meslay in Tours, France; the Helsinki Festival; and Printemps des Arts in Monte Carlo. He has collaborated with a number of eminent conductors, among them Leopold Hager, Günther Neuhold, and Christian Thielemann.

Stoupel's extensive discography includes a critically acclaimed debut CD, released in 1989 on the RPC label, featuring piano music of Shostakovich. Other recordings feature the complete works for piano solo of Arnold Schoenberg and a soon to be released recording of the complete piano sonatas of Scriabin. His recording of the complete works for Viola and Piano by Henri Vieuxtemps with violist Thomas Selditz was awarded the "Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik," the highest German award for a CD recording, in 2003.

The Program

Maurice Ravel famously believed that the violin and the piano were two instruments that should not cohabit in the same piece. About the sonata on today's program, which took him four years to write, he said, "In the writing of the *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, two fundamentally incompatible instruments, I assumed the task, far from bringing their differences into equilibrium, of emphasizing their irreconcilability through their independence." This approach led Ravel to exploit each instrument to its fullest capability.

By the time Ravel wrote the sonata, it was late in his career, and he was fully established as the leading composer in France. In his later years, he came under the influence of American jazz. He was a great admirer of George Gershwin and enjoyed incorporating the jazz style into his own compositions. Though written in classical sonata form, the first movement of the sonata is full of parallel sevenths, a favorite harmonic touch of jazz pianists. The second movement, *Blues*, could have come directly out of a nightclub of Ravel's day. The final movement, *perpetuum mobile*, is a toccata of sorts for the violin, with nonstop sixteenth notes for 179 consecutive measures.

A lover of dance forms, both contemporary and historical, Ravel composed several pieces designed around various dances, including *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and *Valses nobles et sentimentales*. In 1906 he conceived of an idea to write a piece in homage to Johann Strauss Jr., whose music attracted him because of the *joie de vivre* expressed by the waltz rhythm. This idea fell by the wayside for many years, but upon his return to civilian life after serving as an ambulance driver in World War I, Ravel resumed work on his waltzes, beginning to compose *La Valse* in 1919 and completing it in spring 1920. Originally written as a response to a commission from the great impresario Sergei Diaghilev, *La Valse* exists in three versions: the orchestral version, a version for solo piano, and a version for two pianos, which was the one that was first performed in public. Diaghilev rejected the score, causing an irreparable rift between the two men, but the orchestral version almost immediately became a part of the standard concert repertoire.

Haflidi Hallgrímsson is one of the most important figures in the twentieth-century flowering of Icelandic music. Born in 1941 in the small town of Akureyri on the north coast of Iceland, he began playing the cello at age ten and studied in Reykjavik and at the Accademia Santa Cecilia in Rome. He continued his studies in London with Derek Simpson at the Royal Academy of Music and was awarded the coveted Madame Suggia Prize in 1966. The following year he began compositional studies with Alan Bush and Peter Maxwell Davies. On leaving the Royal Academy, he remained in Britain, eventually making his home in Scotland, having been appointed principal cellist of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. The following program note was provided by the composer for performances of his *Offerto*, which he wrote in 1991 in memory of the Icelandic painter Karl Kvaran (1924–1989).

“*Offerto* starts like a trembling hand writing an obituary in dry sand. Saltandos [short strokes played with a bouncing bow], double-stops, and long phrases rather empty of emotional content are notable features of this movement, which seeks consolation in the only ‘fixed sounds,’ the rather hollow sonority of the open strings.

In the second movement, the painter is at work in the silent studio. There are double trills, sudden dramatic outbursts, fast runs, glissando passages, and delicate staccatos. All these musical gestures suggest an ‘amplification’ of the varied sounds the brushes make on the virgin canvas. Karl Kvaran was one of the very few real abstract painters working in Iceland during the latter half of the twentieth century. I visited him regularly at his tiny flat on the top of the old Post and Telecommunications building in the centre of Reykjavik. He was a highly cultured man, warm, brave, and gentle, with a delicious sense of humor. Over the years we became good friends.

The third movement is fast and furious, and repeats and elaborates on fragments that are developed in an almost obsessive manner. This is Baron Münchhausen flying on a cannonball. The tension keeps rising and reaches the main climax in the extreme register of the violin, and after a short pause comes to a soft, abrupt end.

In the last movement, bell-like pizzicatos and gentle lyrical phrases lead gradually to a recitative-like passage, often in double-stops and octaves. A harsh pizzicato on the E string interrupts the flow of the music several times before it reaches the heights, only to fall back gently on to the lowest note on the violin, the open G string.”

The first performance of Schubert’s *Rondo brilliant for Violin and Piano* received a cool reception, probably because the work does not conform to any of the expectations that existed at the time for works for the violin. Consisting of just one long movement, its free-ranging form makes it difficult to fathom on first hearing. Schubert scholar M. Frank Ruppert, the author of *Franz Schubert and the Rose-Cross Mystery*, whose analysis of the same composer’s *String Quartet*, D. 887, appeared in the program notes for the February 3, 2008, concert at the National Gallery, surmises that the seemingly free form of the *Rondo brillant* derives from the fact that it was written with a poem in mind. One of the songs Schubert composed while working on the *Rondo* is the *Romanze des Richard Löwenherz*, D. 907. The text is a German version by Karl Ludwig Müller (1722–1804) of a portion of *The Crusader’s Return* by Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832):

High deeds achieved of knightly fame,
From Palestine the champion came;
The cross upon his shoulders borne,
Battle and blast had dimm’d and torn.
Each dint upon his batter’d shield
Was token of a foughten field;
And thus, beneath his lady’s bower,
He sung, as fell the twilight hour:

“Joy to the fair!—thy knight behold,
Return’d from yonder land of gold;
No wealth he brings, nor wealth can need,
Save his good arms and battle-steed;
His spurs, to dash against a foe,
His lance and sword to lay him low;
Such all the trophies of his toil,
Such—and the hope of Tekla’s smile!

Joy to the fair! whose constant knight
Her favor fired to feats of might;
Unnoted shall she not remain,
Where meet the bright and noble train,
Minstrel shall sing and herald tell:
‘Mark yonder maid of beauty well,
‘Tis she for whose bright eyes was won
The listed field of Askalon!

Note well her smile!—it edged the blade
Which fifty wives to widows made,
When, vain his strength and Mahound’s spell,
Iconium’s turban’d Soldan fell.
Seest thou her locks, whose sunny glow
Half shows, half shades, her neck of snow?
Twines not of them one golden thread,
But for its sake a Paynim bled.’

Joy to the fair! — my name unknown,
Each deed, and all its praise thine own;
Then, oh, unbar this churlish gate,
The night dew falls, the hour is late.
Inured to Syria's glowing breath,
I feel the north breeze chill as death;
Let grateful love quell maiden shame,
And grant him bliss who brings thee fame."

The sequence of musical ideas in the *Rondo* corresponds to the sequence of ideas in the poem, a detail that would have been unknown to most of Schubert's audience. Despite the reservations of the first hearers, the *Rondo* was accepted by a publisher during Schubert's lifetime and eventually became a part of the standard repertoire for violin and piano.

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Washington Bach Consort

Music by members of the Bach family

June 22, 2008

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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